

Afghan Trading Networks¹

Magnus Marsden and Benjamin D. Hopkins

Summary

Afghanistan has for long been conventionally regarded as a remote space that is peripheral to the wider world. More recent scholarship suggests its multiple connections to a wide variety of regions and settings. Such connections are especially visible when viewed through the lens of the networks and activities of traders from the territories that make-up the modern Afghanistan. Scholars have come to recognise that Afghan traders have for long been active players in many contexts across Asia and beyond. Such traders and the networks they form also play a critically important role in connecting different Asian sub-regions to one another, including those of South Asia and Eurasia, as well as East and West Asia. The role played by Afghan caravanners and religious minorities in the trade between India and Central Asia are especially well-documented by historians, as increasingly too are the activities of Afghan merchants in Ottoman territories. The trading networks in relationship to which Afghan traders have organised themselves are historically dynamic: their orientating values shift across time and space between various forms of religious, ethno-linguistic and also political identity. It is this capacity to switch focus in relationship to changing circumstances is helpfully in understanding the continuing relevance of Afghan traders to 21st century forms of globalised economy, in contexts as varied as the former Soviet Union, China, and the Arabian Peninsula. **Keywords:** Afghanistan, Afghan, trade, trading networks, trust, globalisation

Introduction

When transnational networks are discussed with relation to Afghanistan in the early 21st century, the paramount image dominating the popular imagination is that of global Islamic militancy. Afghanistan inhabits a transnational space of danger populated by violent jihadists from the Maghreb, Mosul and Marseille. If the idea of commercial activity and trade interrupts this image, it does not dislocate it, but rather reinforces the idea of danger born of the country's centrality in the global drug trade, as well as regionally destabilizing circuits of human trafficking and the arms trade. These images disguise rather than illuminate the centrally important, and indeed constitutive role long-distance trade and commercial activity have had, and continue to have in the formation and maintenance of political, economic and social communities in Afghanistan. Recently, historians have increasingly turned their attentions to such patterns of exchange, emphasising the importance of long-distance trade and commercial activity to the dynamics of life within the country and also amongst populations of Afghans residing far from their homeland. But this is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, fascination with the activities and identities of mobile Afghan traders has led to the representation of such actors in popular literature. Most iconic of such representations is the character of Mahboob Ali, the Afghan horse-trader inhabiting the pages of Rudyard Kipling's classic *Kim*.² Complicating this image of the Afghan trader beyond a bit player in an imperial adventure story, the Indian nationalist thinker and writer Rabindranath Tagore illuminated the morally ambiguous ways in which the thousands of money-lenders and traders of dried fruit and *materia medica* were viewed by urban Bengalis in Calcutta in the late nineteenth century.³ More recently, the figure of the merchant has featured in popular representations of Afghan life abroad. Khaled Hosseini's best seller *The Kite Runner* depicts petty trade as one of the ways refugees in the United States during the 1980s sought to

maintain their independence and reputation through earning an autonomous livelihood in the context of being uprooted by war and conflict from the stable and often elite lives in Afghanistan's urban centres.⁴

This entry contextualizes such images with a body of recent historical and anthropological writing about Afghanistan's trading networks from the early modern period to the first two decades of the 21st century. As such it does not focus on trading networks that were an important feature of the ancient history of the territories that currently make-up Afghanistan. It explores how such networks have connected what today forms the territory of Afghanistan to multiple geographic locales in the region and beyond. Doing so requires documenting and exploring the shifting significance of Afghanistan, its inhabitants, environment and commercial centres to such endeavours. In considering these traders, it is important not to homogenise the diverse range of actors involved in commerce and long-distance trade in a complex transregional settings as mono-culturally "Afghan", a problematic term for two main reasons. Firstly, scholars have tended to use of the terms Afghan, Pashtun/Pakhtun and Pathan interchangeably, with little recognition of the meaning that such identity markers carry within the region or the ways in which they reflect contested political histories, often inflected with colonial influences arising principally from British India.⁵ The issue of labelling is especially significant, and problematic, for the country's mobile trading communities.

Secondly, trading networks and communities influential within Afghanistan today are often composed of participants hailing from regions that were of significance to long-distance trading activities long before the making of the modern Afghan state, as well as the modern 'Afghan' national identity. The making of the modern Afghan state resulted in the encapsulation of the country by imperial boundaries in the mid-nineteenth century.⁶ This process involved erecting new divisions between once closely interrelated communities.⁷ It also spurned substantial movements of individuals and communities across the newly created national boundaries.⁸ The fragmentation of communities and consequential movement it has produced, far from being something that concluded with Afghanistan's independence from British India in 1919, has been on-going.⁹ It had ramifications not only on Afghanistan's experience of the decolonisation of South Asia but also of Cold War politics.¹⁰ The legacy of the process through which Afghan territory and its people were rendered in the colonial period is also visible in the transnational nature of the conflicts that tore state and society apart in the 1980s.¹¹ Against this diverse demographic and experiential context, attempts to define 'Afghan' narrowly on the basis of some putative understanding of authenticity or nationality obscure more than they reveal. For these reasons, it is necessary to understand and conceive of 'Afghan' in its widest historical, geographic and social sense, as entailing a plethora of actors who self-identify or are identified as such.

In recent years historians and anthropologists have written extensively about the dynamics, structures and organisational feature of trading networks. This body of literature has distinguished different types of trading networks on a variety of grounds. Early work addressed the extent to which such networks were formed by groups that were forcibly scattered from a homeland or had embarked upon mobility for commercial.¹² As recognition grew of the extent to which in many cases the distinction between forcible dispersion and commercial mobility was analytically unhelpful, scholarship increasingly sought to distinguish such networks on the basis of their structure and geography. Historians have

distinguished networks, for example, on the basis of their being of ‘mono-nodal’ poly-nodal’. In mono-nodal networks a single dominant ‘nodal center’ ‘defines and regulates the identity and economic vitality of the network as a whole’.¹³ By contrast, poly-nodal networks operate from numerous centres, each of which was important to varying degrees for the activities of the trading network as whole.¹⁴ nodes are kept in play partly in order to spread risk. The organisation of networks also has important implications for their internal competition: mono-nodal networks frequently rely on a select body of commercial personnel – often on the basis of a shared ethnic or religious identity – and construct rigid boundaries between themselves and others. As extension into new contexts is an important feature of poly-nodal networks, they tend to be more open to members of the network forging commercial and intimate relationships with outsiders. A final area of analysis concerns the varying role played by values in the dynamics of trading networks: historians have demonstrated that commitment to particular religious ideas and practices explains the historic durability of many network.¹⁵ But scholarship has also recognised the analytical limitations of assuming the centrality of a single set of values to the organisation of trading networks.¹⁶ Similarly, more studies now also analyse how both the values and goals in relationship to which trading networks orientate themselves undergo significant changes over time.¹⁷ The entry is structured around the key geographic regions in which Afghan traders operate, pointing to the most salient aspects of their activities over the past two centuries, and commenting also on the extent to which such histories are visible in Afghan merchant communities today. In addition to foregrounding the expansive geographic scope of Afghan trading networks, this entry also reflects on key themes important to the analysis of such networks, including their ethnic and religious identities, as well as relationship to states and power-holders.

Afghanistan and India/South Asia

Visible in the activities of Afghan trading networks in South Asia is a rich and complex history of commercial, military, and political acumen, combined with a key role in mediating the connections between India’s markets and those of both Central and Inner Asia. Scholarship on the significance of Afghan networks in this region during the eighteenth century explores the ways in which the political dynamics not only of the territory of Afghanistan itself, but also the South Asian contexts in which Afghans settled were shaped by the specific forms of commercial activity Afghans involved themselves in. Afghan nomadic horse traders played a critical role in the establishment of series of ‘Indo-Afghan’ political entities in north India. The political economies of these entities were intimately connected to the activities of Afghan traders in both the trans-Himalaya trade with Tibet and the cross-Hindu Kush trade with Central Asia.¹⁸ These trading networks were largely made-up of ethno-linguistically Pashto-speakers from the Indo-Afghan frontier region, a category of actor that played a critical role in establishing and consolidating commercial centres and networks in north India.¹⁹

While the rise of the British East India Company’s territorial dominion and subsequent imperial rule on the Indian subcontinent proved dire for the fortunes of the Afghan polity, Afghan trading networks adapted to new political circumstances. Traders identifying themselves as Afghan remained critical in terms of mediating South Asia’s relations with the markets of Central Asia and China, as well as those of Russia and Iran. Further, by linking

these regional markets together, the Afghan merchant traders facilitated their integration into the globalizing economy of the nineteenth century. So-called trading tribes such as the ‘Powindahs’ along the Indo-Afghan frontier played a critical role in the transport of goods – including Chinese tea, Afghan medicinal plants and Mexican silver melted into Chinese *yamboos* – between northern India and Central Asia.²⁰ This was especially true when trade routes intersected with nomadic itineraries, but the pressures and opportunities of trade also shaped those routes.²¹ Merchant families (identifying themselves as Hindko-speaking Sethis) in the city of Peshawar were key brokers in the trade between South and Central Asia during the nineteenth century.²² Diasporic networks operating within Afghanistan – especially those identifying as Hindu and Sikhs - collectively designated as ‘Hindki’ in some scholarship – were another group active in trade and its financing between India and Central Asia during this period.²³ Money lenders and bankers from the Punjabi city of Multan and the Sindh town of Shikarpur acted as finance agents in the trade between India and Central Asia. These merchants were important not only for the regional economy, but the imperial one as well, even extending the credit necessary for the British invasion and occupation of Afghanistan during the First Afghan War. Such trading communities maintained merchant houses throughout Afghanistan and Central Asia’s great commercial centres of the time, especially Bukhara.²⁴ As with trading networks elsewhere, the activities of such networks fluctuated in relationship to the shifting fortunes of their commercial nodes.²⁵

Within British India, Afghan merchant networks continued to fill significant niches for Indian society more generally, including the provision of dried fruits, vegetables, spices and materia medica, and credit to the subcontinent’s expanding urban populations, especially those employed in the burgeoning industrial cities of Bombay and Calcutta. Afghan merchant traders were as important to the British India’s social and economic fabric as its famed Mawari traders.²⁶ The dynamics of Afghan trading and credit networks in India during the early twentieth century remains less understood than its nineteenth century predecessor. However, ‘Pathans’ provided credit to striking workers employed in Bombay’s burgeoning textile factories, a practice contributing to negative stereotypes of them due to the collection of interest on the loans they issued.²⁷

The partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and the creation of the postcolonial independent states of India and Pakistan raised new concerns of an economic and logistical nature for Afghanistan’s trading networks, concerns that remain significant to them to this day. The hardening of the Indo-Pakistan border following independence inevitably increased the costs to traders transporting agricultural products – especially dried fruit and nuts – from Afghanistan to India’s cities. While such trade continued, alongside the illicit movement of high value goods such as gold, Afghan traders in India were increasingly isolated from their homeland during this period.

Afghan trading networks in Pakistan fared differently in the post-1947 world. The country’s substantial population of ethno-linguistic Pashtuns meant that Afghan traders in predominantly Pashtun cities such as Peshawar, but also other Pakistani cities – especially Lahore and Karachi – with significant Pashtun communities, were often assimilated. A few Afghan communities located in Indian cities moved to Pakistan, especially Karachi, at the time of partition, though little is understood about such movements at present. Afghan trade networks in Pakistan received a boon with the signing in 1965 of the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA), which allowed Afghan merchants to transit goods through

Pakistan duty-free. Many profited from the illegal re-export of goods brought to Afghanistan under the ATTA back into Pakistan through informal and illicit trade routes. These have fed extensive market complexes in Pakistan's Federally Associated Tribal Areas (FATA), most notably the Barra market, located in Khyber Agency on the peripheries of Peshawar. They have also had a pernicious and corrupting effect on the Pakistani state.

The influx of more than six million refugees following Soviet invasion of 1979 resulted in further layers of Afghan commercial activity in Pakistan. From the 1980s onwards, Afghan refugees faced growing resentment from local populations and communities about their perceived control of particular sectors of the urban economy, such as butchery and transport, as well as the increasingly violent forms of competition with which such business activities were associated. With the fall of the Taliban in 2001, there followed a period of complex negotiations between Afghan traders, local communities and the Pakistan state. Traders sought to remain in the country while also exploring the commercial possibilities available in Afghanistan. But Afghan residency rights, and more particularly the status and role of Afghan traders is a politically contentious issue in Pakistan today. Changes to the ATTA implemented in 2010 reduced the volume of trade to markets previously burgeoning with smuggled goods, leading wealthy Afghan traders and their families to shift capital and businesses to Afghanistan, as well as Dubai and China. Most recently, a crackdown on Afghan migrants living in Pakistan in 2015 led to significant numbers of traders moving their business and families out of the country, mostly to Afghanistan but also the cities of the Arabian Peninsula as well as to Turkey.

The activities of Afghan trading networks in India in the post-2001 period have benefitted from the close Afghanistan-Indian relationship. Ongoing restrictions on the transit of Indian goods through Pakistan en-route to Afghanistan continues to limit the activities of traders from Afghanistan in India. However, the increased possibilities and decreasing costs of airfreight between the two countries has enabled the transport of low weight to high value goods. These possibilities, though, are limited by complex and slow customs procedures which Afghan traders cite as reason for their preference to trade in a whole variety of commodities and raw materials between China and Afghanistan, rather than directly with India. The Chabahar Port in Iran has been developed by the governments of Afghanistan, Iran and India in 2017/18. A key goal of the project is to increase seaborne commercial exchanges between India and Afghanistan using a combination of the Chabahar port in the Persian Gulf and ongoing road connections to southern Afghanistan. The development of the port reflects ongoing difficulties in the transportation of goods from Afghanistan to India using the overland route which passes through Pakistan. The ultimate efficacy of these investments though has yet to be demonstrated.

Afghanistan and Central Asia/Eurasia

While Afghan merchant networks played a connective role between India and Central Asia, the importance of the latter to those networks extends far beyond its status as a destination point for Indian commodities and goods.

Afghan traders have historically played central roles in the bazaars and urban centres of Central Asia, using these not only as mercantile sites but also nodes from which to extend

their networks into other parts of Eurasia, especially Russia. Traders from Afghanistan sold fruit from Central Asia in the bazaar in Nizhny Novgorod in imperial Russia and were even encouraged to the annual trade fair there by Tsar Nicholas I.²⁸ Later, Afghan merchants invested in the Soviet industrial sector during the New Economic Policy years (1922-28). While Soviet trade between Moscow and Kabul was conducted in relationship to a formal barter arrangement, the tens of thousands of technical and university students from Afghanistan who studied in Soviet institutions were involved in a lively informal trade.²⁹ From Afghanistan, they carried Indian cloth to sell on the black market in the Soviet Union. They returned with teapots and Azerbaijani air conditioning units to sell in Kabul.³⁰

More recently, trading networks composed of traders from Afghanistan have once again been active in the economies of Central Asia, as well as those of Russia and the post-Soviet world more generally. Afghan merchants have been a mainstay in bazaars across Central Asia – notably Almaty, Dushanbe, Khujand and Tashkent - since the Soviet collapse in 1991, playing multifaceted and dynamic roles. Traders from Afghanistan supplied Central Asians with food stuffs and other commodities from Iran, Turkey and South Asia in particular, again assuming their historic role as middlemen between Central Asia and other world regions. In the 2000s, such traders became increasingly active in the trade of Chinese goods in Russia and Ukraine, countries in which they established multiple nodes for their activities in cities such as St Petersburg, Moscow, Rostov-on-Don and Krasnodar in Russia, and Kiev and Odessa in Ukraine. Successful trading networks depended on contacts with regional security officials cultivated during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan for the protection of their collective and individual activities. Indeed, many of the traders who established these trading networks were themselves formerly state officials in the pro-Soviet Afghan government of the 1980s, and members of the socialist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. As such past ideological commitments played a central role in the relationships critical for their commercial activities, revealing an interesting case of what had primarily been political networks evolving into those with a predominantly economic focus.³²



Fig. 2. Outline of Afghan trading activities in Central Asia in the first decades of the 21st century

Alongside such network initially based on commitment to modern, political ideologies, other Afghan traders active in the Soviet Union worked with one another in relationship to historically salient ethno-linguistic and religious identities. Into the first decades of the 21st century, Hindu and Sikh traders form an important part of Afghan trading networks in the former Soviet space. Reprising their role from the imperial pasts, 'Hindki' traders often supply credit and commodities on credit to traders of Muslim background from Afghanistan working in the bazaars of Russia and Ukraine.³³

As with South Asia's Pashtuns, the distinction between Central Asian and Afghan merchants is a blurred one subject to continual and complex negotiation. Afghanistan's northern borderlands with the Central Asian republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were formerly associated with the Central Asian khanates, such as Bukhara, Merv, Khoqand and Khiva, until the early nineteenth century.³⁴ Bukhara was long an important center and hub of transregional Asian trade which reached as far as Iran, Muscovy, Siberia, the Ottoman Empire, China and India.³⁵ The city, through Afghan and other merchant networks such as Armenians, exported goods, including the region's high quality cotton materials and sheepskin furs. At the same time, it imported and transited goods from across Asia. Rhubarb purchased in China and Siberia was, for example, sold in Iran and the Ottoman world where it was regarded as an essential medicinal ingredient. Likewise, Bukharan merchants purchased valuable furs in Siberia, and sold these in Iran. Officials frequently imposed barriers on the ability of Bukharan merchants to operate across these contexts. Muscovy's rulers were concerned that the Bukharan merchants should not take excessive quantities of good fur from their territory, lest its value decrease for the Shahs of Iran, to whom the tsars often presented high quality furs as diplomatic gifts.

Not all Bukharan and Central Asian merchants operated in this mobile manner. Some individual merchants were permanently settled outside of the Emirate, owning land and running businesses in places like Siberia and Qing-controlled Turkestan.³⁷ Regional authorities recognised the significance of such merchants for local economies, allowing the merchants to trade without paying taxes on their activities. In addition to dealing with far away people and their rulers, Bukhara's merchants also engaged in close trading relations with communities surrounding the urban centres in which they were based. Around Bukhara itself, they traded with Turkmen tribesmen for lamb, fox fur and carpets and provided Bukhara's elite with fermented mare's milk.

With the integration of Bukhara into the Tsarist and later Soviet empires, Bukhara's merchants and their transregional activities, as well as the city's historic status as an urban commercial centre declined. In the wake of the Soviet conquest of Central Asia, an unknown proportion of Bukhara's commercial community fled to Iran, Afghanistan, Chinese Turkestan, and India. There they settled, reshaping the societies and states to which they fled. Bukharan émigrés to northern Afghanistan adapted to a new set of circumstances in what at the time was officially referred to as "Afghan Turkestan".³⁸ They brought with them the trade of karakul lamb pelt, which continued to be of importance to the émigrés from Central Asia who also became active in related commercial fields such as the sale of meat and animal skins. Northern Afghanistan's fur trade also attracted Farsi-speaking Afghan Jewish traders and financiers based in the cities of Kabul and Herat, as well as Ashkenazi and Bukharan Jews who had fled the violence that affected their lives and commercial activities in Baku, Bukhara, Samarqand, and Tashkent. A purported fear amongst Afghan government officials that Bolshevik agents were working in Afghanistan disguised as Jewish traders, resulted not only in the expulsion of Jewish Central Asian émigrés from Afghanistan, but also, eventually, the departure of the country's sizeable Jewish community to Palestine.³⁹ Though reduced in numbers and influence, Jewish traders continued to play a role as financiers in the bazaars of Kabul and Herat until the 1970s.

Many of these émigré Central Asian merchants made their fortunes and reputations with Afghanistan's most iconic commodity: the carpet. The modern trade in 'Bukharan' carpets to

European and American markets stretches back to the eighteenth century.⁴⁰ Émigrés' ability to play an important role in this commercial niche in Afghanistan builds on a long and intimate knowledge of the activity. Some of Afghanistan's best known merchants, especially respected for the innovative role they played in the production and distribution of carpets, come from families that crossed the Amu Darya and migrated to Afghanistan in the late 1920s and 1930s. Such merchants were reputed for 'establishing small factories in northern Afghanistan that employed men and children to weave cheap carpets specifically for the Western market.'⁴¹ Moreover, they opened transport companies connecting the cities of northern Afghanistan to Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey, as well as for creating international business networks, most especially in the centres of the carpet trade, Hamburg, Hannover, and Istanbul.

Central Asia's importance lay not only in the fact that it was a region with which traders from Afghanistan interacted, but also in the role that migration between the two contexts played in the production of particular trading networks that have subsequently become associated with Afghanistan. It was thus both receptive and productive of Afghan trading networks.

Afghanistan and the Arabian Peninsula/the Gulf

In the expanding body of historical and anthropological literature on the Indian Ocean there is a significant emphasis on merchant communities from the Arabian peninsula connecting disparate contexts across this vast maritime realm. By contrast, images of Afghan communities in the peninsula tend to crystallise around the figure of the migrant labourer, devoid of citizenship and respect in the notoriously hierarchical Gulf States. Recent scholarship, however, has nuanced the historic presence of Afghans not only as labourers but also as merchants and itinerant traders in the Arabian Peninsula – a presence that dates to at least the eighteenth century but was intensified by the steam-powered revolution of the late nineteenth century.⁴² By the late nineteenth century 'Zanzibari intermediaries, European firms and Afghan traders interacted with one another in port cities such as Muscat in relation to trade in arms and ammunition, as well as human bodies.'⁴³ Afghan arms dealers interacted with the Europeans and Americans as a result of the Sultan's commercial agreements.⁴⁴

The Bolshevik revolution in Central Asia led to an influx of refugees, including commercial and merchant families, to the holy cities of the Hejaz: Mecca and Madinah. While communities of Central Asians were present in the hajj before the wave of migrants from the Soviet Union in the 1920s, playing the role of middleman between official Arab pilgrimage guides and Central Asian pilgrims, their numbers increased exponentially with the refugee influx.⁴⁵ These refugee communities were joined by later émigrés who fled Chinese Turkestan after the collapse of the Turkistan state in 1949 or found themselves conducting pilgrimage in Arabia as the events unfolded in China.⁴⁶ Whilst in no simple sense 'Afghan' such families were often closely related to Central Asian families that relocated to Afghanistan in the 1920s. Such connections were maintained in the settings of exile by visits of Afghanistan-based relatives to the Hejaz on the hajj. Pilgrims continued to travel to Saudi Arabia from Afghanistan by road until at least the 1970s. Such journeys offered important trading possibilities. Saudi Arabia-based Central Asians also visited Afghanistan and invested in the expanding business portfolios of their fellow Central Asian émigrés in the country. Against the backdrop of political tensions in Afghanistan in the 1970s, Central Asian émigré

families in Afghanistan – now Afghan citizens– increasingly moved their families and investments out of Kabul, a popular destination being Saudi Arabia, where they were able to join wider communities, and also establish businesses. In this manner, networks composed of Afghanistan Central Asian émigrés became increasingly important to urban life in Saudi Arabia. Yet their economic position, like that of all foreigners in the country, remained precarious as it depended on partnerships with sponsoring Saudi nationals. Having familiarised themselves with the complex commercial environment of Saudi Arabia and aware of their relative precariousness, such networks and the families from which they arose also often sought to diversify their savings and locate their families outside of Saudi Arabia. A substantial concentration of such families arose in Istanbul's western residential districts, a setting in which Afghan Central Asian émigrés have also successfully secured Turkish citizenship.⁴⁷

Alongside such historic connections between traders in Afghanistan and the Arabian Peninsula, Afghan networks have extended from the late 1970s onwards into the markets of the Gulf. Against the backdrop of war and conflict in the Afghanistan, and the opportunities offered by the regulation-light oil rich Gulf economies from the 1970s onwards, vibrant Afghan trading communities migrated to the UAE and Oman. Traders from the eastern Afghan province of Paktika, who mostly identify themselves as being of Kharoti tribal background, established themselves in the textiles trade, buying largely from East Asia (initially South Korea, today the city of Keqiao in China's eastern Zhejiang province) and selling to Africans and Central Asians.⁴⁸ Shi'i and Sunni merchants who identify themselves as ethnically Hazara are principally based in Sharjah and specialise in trading second hand vehicles and spare parts. Cars imported from Japan, Europe and North America are sold to customers in Afghanistan and east Africa. A Hazara community in Japan is directly connected to this UAE-centred trade.

West Asia/Ottoman Lands

Afghan trading networks were widely dispersed throughout the lands of the Ottoman Empire and remained so in the post-colonial successor states following its collapse in the wake of World War I. They ranged from Basra to Jerusalem and Istanbul. Their presence raises important questions about both the relationship between Afghanistan and the Ottoman world as well as the complex forms of imperial subjecthood that Afghans abroad availed themselves to.⁴⁹ Circulations of pilgrims and merchants between Afghanistan and the Ottoman Empire were connected to an infrastructure of religious institutions (notably Sufi lodges) in which pilgrims and traders stayed, much like in Afghanistan itself.⁵⁰ Afghan itinerant merchants drew upon multiple forms of imperial jurisdictional subjecthoods during their sojourns, especially when their commercial activities were affected by insecurity and crime. As Afghanistan had ceded its foreign policy and consular affairs to the British Indian government, Afghans petitioned for representation from the officials of British India when running afoul of Ottoman authorities.⁵¹

Sufi lodges played a major role in accommodating traders in the course of their travels through the Ottoman lands and beyond. The importance of Sufi lodges in the Ottoman context raises wider issues regarding the extent to which particular Afghan trading networks were structured in relationship to ties of trust dependent on shared membership of Sufi

brotherhoods, such as the Naqshbandiya-Mojadeddi. These brotherhoods provided networks of knowledge, not only religious but commercial as well, and an infrastructure of commerce in the form of their *sisilas* (religious orders) and lodges (*tekke*) which safeguarded merchants in lands where their physical safety could not be guaranteed, and indeed were sometimes violated by political authorities.⁵² Commercial and religious forms of affiliation overlapped in the nineteenth century, continuing a long tradition common throughout much of the Muslim world.⁵³ By contrast, the hostile policies toward Sufis introduced both by Turkey and Saudi Arabia in the twentieth century seems to have reduced the role played by Sufi brotherhoods in commercial relationships of trust. An absence of public affiliation to Sufism amongst Afghan traders in Turkey underscores a complex interplay of change and continuity in the dynamics of trading networks and the role played by new religious and moral idioms in the fashioning of long-distance ties of trust.

East and Southeast Asia and Australasia

Afghan merchants have a long history in East Asia, dating back to the earliest days of the Silk Road. Lapis lazuli from Badakhshan was an import commodity in the imperial capital of the T'ang dynasty.⁵⁴ There is however considerably less understanding of the nature and role played by Afghan trading networks in China during the more recent past, especially over the past two centuries. Chinese goods filtered overland through Afghan trade networks into British India throughout the nineteenth century.⁵⁵ Close commercial and political relations between Badakhshan and Kashgar and Yarkand continued until the 1940s.⁵⁶ In his narrative of a journey to the source of the Oxus the colonial scholar-official John Wood recounts meeting traders from Yarkand in the village of Jurm in Badakhshan. Wood also encountered a Jew involved in the trade between Chinese Turkestan and Central Asia.⁵⁷ Likewise, Robert Shaw's account of an expedition to Chinese Turkestan reported an encounter with an Englishman living the life of a mendicant only with the support of an Afghan trader on the route between Yarkand and Kashgar.⁵⁸ The British Hungarian archaeologist Aurel Stein also reported working with antique dealers and rare book dealers active in eastern China during his spells conducting research in the region between 1900 and 1930.⁵⁹ Even the political fortunes of Yarkand were intimately tied with those of Kabul. After the Xinjiang revolts of 1864, Ghulam Husayn - who hailed 'from a notable family in Kabul' - became leader of Yarkand.⁶⁰ After the collapse of the Emirate of Turkestan in 1949 and the incorporation of eastern Turkestan within the People's Republic of China little is known about the presence or otherwise of Afghan traders in China.

In contrast, Japan was an important destination for traders from Afghanistan in the first decades of the twentieth century.⁶¹ Japanese products were imported into Afghanistan by Japan-based Afghan agents – often of Hindu and Sikh background - while the family firms of Central Asian émigrés in Afghanistan cultivated their reputation for being trustworthy suppliers of high quality foreign goods through the sale of Japanese products. From the 1980s communities of Hazara (especially from the Darra-e Turkmen valley in the central province of Parwan) migrated to Japan in order to act as agents and labour in the expanding trade in second-hand cars, a key hub for which was Sharjah in the UAE. A few such individuals and their families were able to legalise their status in Japan and are now mostly based in the Chiba prefecture to the east of Tokyo.⁶²

Afghan trading networks have also been active in Hong Kong from at least the 1980s onwards, interacting with established communities of 'Pathans' who moved to the imperial outpost from British India in connection with the security services.⁶³ Electronics and other items (notably bicycles referred to in Kabul as 'Chinese') were sourced by traders in Hong Kong for export to Afghanistan. Hong Kong previously served as a key node in the worldwide trade in lapis lazuli, although its role today has been eclipsed by cities in southern China as well as Bangkok. Up to 50 Afghan trading offices reportedly operated in the city during the 1980s and early 1990s. Additionally, South Korea was an important node for textile traders working out of Afghanistan but also South Asia and the Gulf, until the 2000s at which point most traders shifted their principle procurement activities to China. Much of Afghanistan most popular drink (green tea) is sourced by Afghan merchants in Vietnam – a country to which they also export Afghan cumin.

After China opened its economy in the early 1990s, Afghan trading networks established a visible presence in Chinese cities that are globally important nodes for the long-distance trade in low grade commodities. In the early 1990s, the node of these trading networks established was the western city of Urumqi. The city was easily accessible by flight from Kabul and was also located on the land routes used by Afghan traders working both in the post-Soviet settings and South Asia. As this type of economic activity increasingly shifted to cities along China's eastern seaboard, there has also been a geographical shift in the location of the nodes of Afghan trading networks. Yiwu and Guangzhou are currently the most significant cities for Afghan traders in China – Yiwu being the base to around 4000 traders from Afghanistan.⁶⁴ Afghans based in each of these cities run transport and trading offices to facilitate the commercial activities of Afghans involved in what anthropologists refer to as 'globalisation from below'.⁶⁵ The shift of traders out of western China has been further intensified by the increasingly surveillance of Muslim traders in Xinjiang by the Chinese state.

The activities of Afghan trading networks in Malaysia and Thailand – like those in Hong Kong – are connected to the British colonial period through the circulation of Pathans who were employed as police and watchmen in Malaysia, eventually establishing themselves as traders and merchants. In Malaysia 'Pathans' are active in the textile trade, supplying the country and also neighbouring predominantly Muslim regions of Thailand with cloth purchased in South Korea and Malaysia. Indeed, 'Pathan' networks in Thailand have not only been active in the commodity trade but have also earned themselves a name for producing leading actors in the local film industry.⁶⁶ In the present period, Malaysia and Indonesia are both attractive sites for trade investment by Afghan entrepreneurs. Afghans active in the trade in commodities produced from palm oil (especially cooking oil and substances required in the manufacture of cosmetics) are active in both places. This trend has been invigorated by new taxation arrangements in the UAE making the country a less attractive base than was the case a decade previously. Traders who identify themselves as Afghan are active in the oriental carpet trade in Singapore – their businesses being appropriately located a few steps away from the city's Kandahar Street.

Afghan merchant networks have also been present in Australia since at least the mid-nineteenth century. Their presence originated with a remarkable story of the shipment of camels and their human handlers (approximately 1 per 8 camels) from the Indo-Afghan frontier to Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century. The need for camels arose in

Australia against the backdrop of a significant rise in population density in the country's coastal regions, leading to the settling of its desert interior. The first shipment of camels was organised in 1865 by Scottish traders based in Australia. There followed a number of shipments of camels and camel handlers until 1907. Afghan settlers in Australia comprised individuals connected through language, culture and history to the Indo-Afghan frontier but who also had for long been sojourners in South Asia's cities, including most especially Karachi.⁶⁷

Western Europe & The Americas

Whilst imperial metropolises in Europe and America have not been as important for Afghan trading networks as for transnational traders with connections to parts of the world more clearly integrated within imperial commerce, Afghans have nevertheless secured commercial footholds in advanced economies.⁶⁸ In this sense, they might be contrasted with other Asian trade networks that encountered problems in extending their activities into the west.⁶⁹

Afghans have had a long relationship with and presence in western Europe, particularly in Germany.⁷⁰ It is no surprise then that Germany has served as the centre for many of the trading activities undertaken by Afghan merchant networks. During the Cold War, visa free travel to West Germany and the easy processing of visas for Afghan citizens in communist East Germany meant that Afghans were able to engage in a trade of goods from the West in the eastern bloc countries, and vice versa. Luminaries in the trade in Afghan and Central Asian carpets, such as the ethnically Turkmen Aqmurad Boy, established warehouses in Hamburg from the 1970s onwards. These Turkmen traders even claimed a space in the most German of culinary markets, sausages, supplying from Afghanistan significant volumes of animal intestine that was processed for the manufacture of sausage skins. Afghan merchant networks have an established history in other financial and commercial hubs of western Europe and north America as well. The sale of Afghanistan's famed karakul furs, which supplied the New York fashion world in the 1950s, allowed traders to hold bank accounts in the USA which they used to invest capital in North American markets.⁷¹ Indeed, this was such an important trade that the Afghan government's foreign reserves were generated from this trade and in part financed the Helmand Valley Authority development project of that era.⁷²

Afghans have successfully embedded their networks in North America and Western Europe not only through trade in high value goods, but also through smaller scale trading and service activities. In a remarkable range of settings both before and after the expanding numbers of refugees entering such contexts from the mid-80s onwards Afghans have also proven adept financial players and businessmen. A more commonplace setting in which to find Afghan trading networks in operation in Western settings is however in urban and often ethnically-based niche economies. In London Afghans are purveyors of cloth and tropical fish to African and Caribbean communities.⁷³ In Los Angeles shopkeepers of Afghan background work in socially fraught neighbourhoods and alongside migrant entrepreneurs from different contexts, including those of Jewish, East Asia, and Latin American origins.⁷⁴ In Philadelphia and Washington DC, as in many other US cities, Afghan émigrés, including the Karzai family, own restaurants serving both their own communities and the larger American public they are now part of. Similarly, traders of Afghan background based in Canadian cities such

as Toronto are connected to their compatriots based elsewhere in the world, especially in Sharjah to which Canada-based traders frequently send second-hand vehicles. A fascinating new arena in which communities of Afghan trader-refugees are establishing themselves is that of Latin America. Historians have explored the migration of 'Pathans' from India to the British Guyana and Surinam in the context of 'coolie labour' programmes in the 19th century.⁷⁵ In more recent times, Brazil, Argentina and Chile have granted asylum to small numbers of Afghan refugees – nascent communities that our Afghan interlocutors in China inform us are now playing an active role in business activities, such as the export to China of Chilean wood. The trade in semi-precious stones – a field of commercial active in which Afghans play a prominent global role – has also led Afghans to travel to and settle in new contexts. US-based Afghans frequently visit Mexico to purchase semi-precious stones they then sell in Hong Kong and China. Afghans have also established companies dealing in gemstones in Africa, especially in Nigeria and Zambia. The rise in migration of refugees from Afghanistan to Europe and elsewhere from 2015 onwards will no doubt result in both the consolidation and also extension of the presence of Afghan traders in many settings.

Discussion of the Literature

The form and nature of Afghanistan's global connections has emerged as a vibrant focus of inter-disciplinary scholarship over the past few years.⁷⁶ The scholarly study of Afghanistan formerly dwelled on the country's supposed isolation from the outside world, and the purported insulation of its social structures and culture from the forces of colonialism and modernity that had transformed other parts of Asia. Over the past decade, scholarship has begun the task of reinstating Afghanistan in wider, often global, dynamics. Against this analytical backdrop, there has been a focus on the connective role played by Afghan traders, detailing not only the insights that a consideration of this category of actors reveal about Afghanistan's economy, but also into myriad developments across the field of culture, politics, and religion.⁷⁷

This expanding body of scholarship shares an over-arching concern with the agency demonstrated by Afghan actors, especially in fashioning connections between the country and settings beyond.⁷⁸ The connective powers of Afghan traders also transgress a range of scales, from the regional to the transregional and also the global.⁷⁹ Afghan agency has been analysed through considerations of the ways in which traders have negotiated the modernizing Afghan state and its attempts to divert the profits of merchants into state coffers.⁸⁰ There is also growing recognition of the responses of Afghan traders to shifts in the global economy – recognised by historians only relatively recently as being as important to the landlocked country as to Asia's great maritime economies.⁸¹

Recent scholarship has also benefited from collaborations between historians and anthropologists. A thematic focus of much scholarship has been the importance of trust to the activities of long-distance Afghan traders.⁸² Scholars have debated the relative significance of ethnicity and kinship to the making relationships of trust. They have also brought attention to the analytical problems of an over-emphasis on trust, by distinguishing between 'trust' and 'trustworthiness', and addressed how – from the perspective of merchants themselves – it is the ability to be a successful trader in a wider context of mistrust that deserves critical insight and reflection.⁸³

As in the study of other trading networks, scholarship has simultaneously explored the mobility of traders and the strategies that such traders use to anchor themselves to particular trading nodes.⁸⁴ Afghan long-distance traders have deployed a combination of specific financial practices, especially loan provisioning, and knowledge of the law in order to fashion and sustain ties to the communities amongst which they live. One such ‘anchoring strategy’ is investment in property.⁸⁵ Another is marriage to local women.⁸⁶ Ethnographic work on Afghan trading networks has also brought attention to the role played by linguistic and cultural competence in the overseas activities of Afghan merchants.⁸⁷ This empirical finding also raises conceptual issues about how far it is helpful to think of such networks as ‘cosmopolitan’, and, if so, whether these are distinctly ‘Islamic’.⁸⁸

The emerging literature on Afghan trading networks is interestingly positioned in relationship to the so-called ‘oceanic turn’, a development in scholarship that has increasingly located sea-based perspectives at the centre of the study of inter-Asian connections.⁸⁹ It is tempting to assume that Afghan trade networks stand to reveal a great deal about the nature of inland trade and connections, a thematic area overshadowed in recent years by the focus on the Indian Ocean. Yet studies of Afghan networks have nuanced debate about the distinction between the inland and oceanic worlds. The participation of Afghan traders in the trading nodes of the Arabian Gulf stretches back to long before the oil boom and connected foreign worker influx of the 1970s. Similarly, peripatetic Afghan trading networks also operated in Ottoman port cities, such as Basra, Istanbul and Jeddah – all settings in which Afghan communities continue to work to this day.

Scholarship across anthropology and history on Afghan trading networks is leading to new developments in the conceptualisation of Afghanistan. It is challenging the salience of models that treat the country as an isolated buffer state crafted by Great Game politics and emphasising instead the role that mobile and adaptable networks have played in connecting it to multiple settings beyond. This scholarship also highlights the importance of multiple forms of agency - especially the critical responsiveness to shifting global political and economic dynamics, and the ability to navigate between multiple jurisdictional subjecthoods – to Afghanistan’s people. Further consideration of the activities of Afghan traders stands to reveal a great deal about the geographical assumptions that have shaped the burgeoning field of inter-Asia studies.

Primary Sources

While traders and merchants, especially those working in urban centres, are often precise book-keepers and record collectors, in the case of Afghan trading networks such material remains difficult to access both as a result of the political tensions affecting life in the country, and the degree to which the stories of merchant families are often regarded as carefully guarded secrets. In terms of sources produced by merchants, correspondence between dispersed actors stands to reveal rich insights into the geographic scope of networks as well as the manner in which traders became immersed in different cultural worlds. But the difficulty of securing access to such records means much historical work on Afghanistan’s trading networks comes from the accounts of colonial scholars and officials who regularly encountered Afghan merchants on the course of expeditions and military campaigns in South and Central Asia. Students interested in studying merchant networks in the modern period would be wise to consult magazines and journals published within Afghanistan, and the

memoirs and auto-biographies not only of merchants but also political figures. Such accounts regularly discuss interactions with far flung communities of Afghan traders.

Studying trading networks requires both an intimate knowledge of multiple archives – the British Indian Office, the Ottoman Archives and also those of imperial Russia- as well as familiarity with the languages in which traders wrote, most importantly Persian.

Further Reading

These texts represent a selection of recent scholarship at the interface of anthropology and history on Afghan trading networks that highlight the key themes and approaches highlighted in the preceding discussion.

Ahmed, Faiz, “Contested Subjects: Ottoman and British Jurisdictional Quarrels in re Afghans and Indian Muslims,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3.2(2016): 325-346

Can, Lâle, “Connecting People: A Central Asian Sufi Network in Turn-of-the-Century Istanbul,” *Modern Asian Studies* 46 (2012): 373-401

Crews, Robert, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015),

Dale, Stephen, *Indian Merchants and the Eurasian Trade*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Ferdinand, Klaus, *Afghan Nomads: Caravans, Conflicts and Trade in Afghanistan and British India 1800-1980*, (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 2006).

Hopkins, Benjamin. D., *The Making of Modern Afghanistan*, (London: Palgrave, 2009).

Hanifi, Shah Mahmoud, *Connecting Histories of Afghanistan*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

Levi, Scott C. *The Indian diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade*, (Leiden: Brill, 2002)

Markovits, Claude, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Marsden, Magnus, *Trading Worlds: Afghan Merchants across Modern Frontiers*, (London: Hurst, 2016).

Monsutti, Alessandro, *War and Migration: Social Networks and Economic Strategies of the Hazaras of Afghanistan*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2005).

Nichols, Robert, *A History of Pashtun Migration*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007)

Sood, Gagan, *India and the Islamic Heartlands: An Eighteenth-Century World of Circulation and Exchange*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)

Stephens, Julia, “An Uncertain Inheritance: The Imperial Travels of Legal Migrants from British India to Ottoman Iraq,” *Law and History Review* 32 (4): 749-772.

Notes

-
- ¹ The contribution of Magnus Marsden to this chapter would not have been possible without the support of funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme 669 132 – TRODITIES, 'Yiwu Trust, Global Traders and Commodities in a Chinese International City'.
- ² Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*, (London: Penguin, 1994).
- ³ Rabrindrath Tagore, 'Kabuliwallah', in Tagore: Selected Short Stories, translated by William Radice, (London: Penguin, 2005). For a contemporary visual ethnography of Kolkata's Afghan trading community, see <https://www.kabultokolkata.com/>.
- ⁴ Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner*, (Riverhead Trade, 2004).
- ⁵ Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "A History of Linguistic Boundary crossing within and around Pashto," in *Beyond Swat: History, Society and Economy along the Afghanistan Pakistan Frontier*, eds. Magnus Marsden and Benjamin D. Hopkins (London: Hurst, 2013) pp. 63-76.
- ⁶ Francesca Fouli, "Incorporating north-western Afghanistan into the British Empire: experiments in indirect rule through the making of an imperial frontier, 1884-87," *Afghanistan* 1, no. 1 (April 2018): 4-25. Benjamin D. Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan* (London: Palgrave, 2008).
- ⁷ Magnus Marsden and Benjamin D. Hopkins, *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier* (London: Hurst, 2012).
- ⁸ Benjamin D. Hopkins, "The bounds of identity: the Goldsmid mission and the delineation of the Perso-Afghan border in the nineteenth century," *Journal of Global History* 2, no. 2 (2007): 233-54. Cf. Francesca Fuoli, "Colonialism and State-Building in Afghanistan: Anglo-Afghan Cooperation in the Institutionalisation of Ethnic Difference, 1869-1900," PhD Thesis (London: Soas, University of London, 2017).
- ⁹ Faiz Ahmed, *Afghanistan Rising: Islamic Law and Statecraft between the Ottoman and British Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2017). See also Barnett Rubin, *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System, 2nd Edition*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
- ¹⁰ Elisabeth Leake *The Defiant Border: the Afghanistan and Pakistan borderlands in the Era of Decolonisation, 1936-1965*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
- ¹¹ Timothy Nunnan, *Humanitarian Invasion: Global Development in Cold War Afghanistan*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). See also David Edwards, *Heroes of the Age: Moral Faultlines on the Afghan Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
- ¹² Philip Curtin, *Cross Cultural Trade in World History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- ¹³ David Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2014), p. 15.
- ¹⁴ Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).
- ¹⁵ Engseng Ho, *Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility Across the Indian Ocean*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
- ¹⁶ Abner Cohen, "Cultural Strategies in the Organisation of Trading Diasporas", in *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa*, ed. Claude Meillassoux, (London: International African Institute/Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 266–84. Pnina Werbner, "Theorizing Complex Diasporas: Purity and Hybridity in the South Asian Public Sphere in Britain", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30. 5 (2004), pp. 895–911.
- ¹⁷ David Sebouh Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2014).
- ¹⁸ Jos Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire, c.1710, 1810*, (Leiden: Brill, 1995); Niels Steensgard, "The Route through Quandahar: the Significance of Trade from India to the West in the Seventeenth Century," in *Merchants, Companies and Trade: Europe and Asia in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Sushil Chaudhury and Michael Morineau (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1999), pp. 55-73.
- ¹⁹ Robert Nichols, *A History of Pashtun Migration*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007); cf. Edwina Thompson *Trust is the Coin of the Realm: Lessons from the Money Men in Afghanistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- ²⁰ Benjamin D. Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan*, (London: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 110-62.
- ²¹ Klaus Ferdinand, *Afghan Nomads: Caravans, Conflicts and Trade in Afghanistan and British India 1800-1980*, (Copenhagen: Rhodos, 2006).
- ²² Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, *Connecting Histories of Afghanistan*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

-
- ²³ Ibid. Scott C. Levi, *The Indian diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade*, (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Scott C. Levi, *Caravans: Indian Merchants on the Silk Road* (New York: Penguin, 2015). Stephen Dale, *Indian Merchants and the Eurasian Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- ²⁴ Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- ²⁵ Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).
- ²⁶ Thomas Timberg, *The Marwaris: From Traders to Industrialists*, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1978).
- ²⁷ Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, c. 1850–1950*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- ²⁸ Benjamin D. Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan* (London: Palgrave, 2008), p. 121. Robert D. Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), pp. 22-25.
- ²⁹ Maxwell Fry, *The Afghan Economy: Money, Finance and the Critical Constraints to Development*, (Leiden: Brill, 1974).
- ³⁰ Magnus Marsden 'From Kabul to Kiev: Afghan Trading Networks across the Former Soviet Union', *Modern Asian Studies*, 49.4 (2015): 1010-104
- ³² Magnus Marsden, *Trading Worlds: Afghan Merchants across Modern Frontiers*, (London: Hurst, 2016).
- ³³ Magnus Marsden, "Islamic cosmopolitanism out of Muslim Asia: Hindu-Muslim business co-operation between Odessa and Yiwu," *History and Anthropology* 29.1 (2018): 121-139.
- ³⁴ Jonathan Lee, *The ancient supremacy: Bukhara, Afghanistan and the Battle for Balkh*, (Leiden: Brill, 1996). Francesca Fouli, "Incorporating north-western Afghanistan into the British Empire: experiments in indirect rule through the making of an imperial frontier, 1884-87," *Afghanistan* 1, no. 1 (April 2018): 4-25. Robert McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480-1889*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1991). Scott C. Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand, 1709–1876: Central Asia in the Global Age*, (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2017).
- ³⁵ Audrey Burton, *Bukharan Trade, 1558-1718*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1993).
- ³⁷ Erika Monahan, *The Merchants of Siberia: Trade in Early Modern Eurasia*, (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2015). On Andijani merchant networks in Qing-controlled Xinjiang, see Scott C. Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand, 1709–1876: Central Asia in the Global Age*, (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 62-67
- ³⁸ Afzal Nasiri and Marie Khalili, *Memoirs of Khalilullah Lhalil: an Afghan Philosopher Poet – a Conversation with his Daughter* (Virginia: Afzal Nasiri and Marie Khalili, 2012). Nazif Shahrani, "Pining for Bukhara in Afghanistan: Poetics and Politics of Exilic Identity and Emotions," in *Reform Movements and Revolutions in Turkistan 1900-1924: Studies in Honour of Osman Khoja*, ed. Timur Kocaoglu, (Haarlem, Netherlands: SOTA, 2001), pp. 369-391. Audrey Shalinsky, *Long Years of Exile*, (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1993); Mohammad Khan Jalallar, *Rumi Tomato: Autobiography of an Afghan Minister*, ed. Babur Rashidzada, (USA: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2011).
- ³⁹ Sara Koplik, "The Demise of Afghanistan's Jewish Community and the Soviet Refugee Crisis." *Iranian Studies*. 36, no. 3. (2003): 353-379.
- ⁴⁰ Brian Spooner, "Weavers and Dealers: the Authenticity of an Oriental Carpet," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 195-235.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 216-217.
- ⁴² Robert D. Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), pp. 23-24.
- ⁴³ T. R. Moreman, "The arms trade and the North-West frontier Pathan tribes, 1890-1914." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*. 22, no. 2 (1994): 187-216. Benjamin D. Hopkins, "Race, Sex and Slavery: 'Forced Labour' in Central Asia and Afghanistan in the early 19th century." *Modern Asian Studies* 42, no. 2 (2008): 629-71. Jeff Eden, "Beyond the Bazaars: Geographies of the slave trade in Central Asia." *Modern Asian Studies* 51, no. 4 (2017): 919-955.
- ⁴⁴ Robert D. Crews, "Trafficking in Evil? The Global Arms Trade and the Politics of Disorder", in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, eds. James L. Gelvin and Nile Green, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), pp. 121-142.
- ⁴⁵ Eileen Kane *Russian Hajj: Empire and the Pilgrimage in Mecca*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2015).

-
- ⁴⁶ Bayram Balci, "Les Ouzbeks d'Arabie Saoudite entre Integration et Renouveau Identitaire via le Pelerinage." *Central Asian Survey* 22. 1 (2003): 23-44.
- ⁴⁷ Magnus Marsden, "Beyond Bukhara: Trade, Identity and Interregional Exchange across Asia," *History & Anthropology*, forthcoming.
- ⁴⁸ Ka-Kin Cheuk 'Everyday Diplomacy among the Indian Traders in a Chinese Fabric Market,' *Cambridge Anthropology* 34.2 (2016): 42-58.
- ⁴⁹ Faiz Ahmed, *Afghanistan Rising: Islamic Law and Statecraft between the Ottoman and British Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2017).
- ⁵⁰ Robert D. Crews, *Afghan Modern*, pp. 77-79.
- ⁵¹ Faiz Ahmed, "Contested Subjects: Ottoman and British Jurisdictional Quarrels in re Afghans and Indian Muslims," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3.2(2016): 325-346; Lâle Can, "Connecting People: A Central Asian Sufi Network in Turn-of-the-Century Istanbul," *Modern Asian Studies* 46 (2012): 373-401; Lâle Can "The protection question: Central Asians and Extraterritoriality in the Late Ottoman Empire," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 48 (2016): 769-699; Julia Stephens, "An Uncertain Inheritance: The Imperial Travels of Legal Migrants from British India to Ottoman Iraq," *Law and History Review* 32 (4): 749-772.
- ⁵² Waleed Ziad, "Transporting knowledge in the Durrani Empire: two manuals of Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi practice," in *Afghanistan's Islam: From conversion to the Taliban*. Edited by Nile Green. University of California Press, 2017. 105-28. Grace Martin Smith, "The Özbek Tekkes of Istanbul", *Der Islam* 57. 1 (1980), pp. 130-39.
- ⁵³ Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).
- ⁵⁴ Edward Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics*, (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1986 [1963]).
- ⁵⁵ Hopkins, *The making of Modern Afghanistan*. 124-6.
- ⁵⁶ Hermann Kreutzmann, *Pamirian Crossroads: Kirghiz and Wakhi of High Asia*, (Harrassowitz Verlag: Wiesbaden, 2015)
- ⁵⁷ John Wood, *A Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Source of the River Oxus: By the Route of the Indus, Kabul, and Badakhshan, Performed Under the Sanction of ... of India, in the Years 1836, 1837, and 1838*, (Palala Press, 2018).
- ⁵⁸ Robert Shaw, *Visits To High Tartary, Yârkand, And Kâshgar (formerly Chinese Tartary): And Return Journey Over The Karakoram Pass* (London, John Murray: 1871).
- ⁵⁹ See generally Aurel Stein. 1933. *On ancient Central-Asian tracks: brief narrative of three expeditions in innermost Asia and north-western China*. London: Macmillan.
- ⁶⁰ Kim, H. 2004. *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864-1877*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 61-66.
- ⁶¹ David Price, *Anthropological Evidence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War*, (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2008), pp 234-235.
- ⁶² Magnus Marsden pers.com based on a research visit to Cheba Prefecture, Japan in June 2016.
- ⁶³ Barbara-Sue White, *Turbans and Traders: Hong Kong's Indian Communities*, (Hong Kong: OUP, 1994).
- ⁶⁴ Magnus Marsden, 2016a. "Crossing Eurasia: trans-regional Afghan trading networks in China and beyond." *Central Asian Survey*, 35.1 (2016): 1-15; Magnus Marsden, "Actually existing Silk Roads," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 8.1 (2017): 22-30.
- ⁶⁵ Gordon Matthews et.al. *Globalization from Below: The World's Other Economy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).
- ⁶⁶ Alexander Horstman, "The Tablighi Jama'at, Transnational Islam, and the Transformation of the Self between Southern Thailand and South Asia," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* Volume 27. 1 (2007): 26-40.
- ⁶⁷ Christine Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns: A History of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia*, (Alice Springs: Paul Fitzsimons, 2002); Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, "Comparing camels in Afghanistan and Australia: Industry and nationalism during the Long Nineteenth Century," conference presented at the SOAS Camel conference, London, 2011. Available online <https://www.soas.ac.uk/camelconference2011/file75400.pdf>. Peta Stephenson, *Islam Dreaming: Indigenous Muslims in Australia*, (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010).
- ⁶⁸ Mark-Anthony Falzon *Cosmopolitan Connections: The Sindhi Diaspora, 1860-2000* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

-
- ⁶⁹ William Clarence-Smith, 'Middle Eastern Entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia, c. 1750–1950', in I. Baghdiantz-McCabe, C. Harlaftis, and I. Pepalasis Minoglou (eds), *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four centuries of History*, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), pp. 217–44.
- ⁷⁰ For background on Afghanistan's relations with Germany, see Michael Fuchs 'Afghanistan in Deutschland' in Daxner, M. (ed.), *Deutschland in Afghanistan* (Oldenburg: BIS-Verlag, 2014).
- ⁷¹ Robert D. Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 151.
- ⁷² Robert Nichols. Personal communication, March 2018.
- ⁷³ Magnus Marsden, *Trading Worlds: Afghan Merchants across Modern Frontiers* (London: Hurst, 2016).
- ⁷⁴ Jennifer Lee, *Civility in the City: Blacks, Jews and Koreans in Urban America*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).
- ⁷⁵ E.g. Raymond Chickrie, "The Afghan Muslims of Guyana and Suriname", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22.2 (2002): 381-399.
- ⁷⁶ Nile Green, "Locating Afghan History," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45. 1 (2013): 132-134; "The Road to Kabul: Automobiles and Afghan Internationalism, 1900-1940", in Magnus Marsden & Benjamin Hopkins (eds), *Beyond Swat: History, Society and Economy along the Afghanistan-Pakistan Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. Alessandro Monsutti, "Anthropologizing Afghanistan: Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42: 269-185.
- ⁷⁷ Magnus Marsden, "Being a Diplomat on the Frontier of South and Central Asia: Trade and Traders in Afghanistan", *Beyond Swat: History, Society and Economy along the Afghanistan-Pakistan Frontier*, eds. Magnus Marsden & Benjamin D. Hopkins, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. 93-103.
- ⁷⁸ *Afghan history through Afghan eyes*. Edited by Nile Green (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2017).
- ⁷⁹ Magnus Marsden *Trading Worlds: Afghan Merchants across Modern Frontiers*, (London: Hurst, 2016). Robert Crews, *Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).
- ⁸⁰ Shah Mahmoud Hanifi, *Connecting Histories of Afghanistan*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).
- ⁸¹ Benjamin D. Hopkins, *The Making of Modern Afghanistan* (London: Palgrave, 2009).
- ⁸² Nile Green, "Locating Afghan History," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45. 1 (2013): 132-134; "The Road to Kabul: Automobiles and Afghan Internationalism, 1900-1940", in Magnus Marsden & Benjamin Hopkins (eds), *Beyond Swat: History, Society and Economy along the Afghanistan-Pakistan Frontier* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. Alessandro Monsutti, "Anthropologizing Afghanistan: Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42: 269-185.
- ⁸³ Alessandro Monsutti, 'Trust, Friendship and Transversal Ties of Cooperation among Afghans', in *Local Politics in Afghanistan: A Century of Intervention in the Social Order*, edited by Conrad Schetter, (London: Hurst, 2013), pp.147-162. Magnus Marsden, "Civility and diplomacy: trust and dissimulation in transnational Afghan trading networks." *Anthropological Theory* (forthcoming).
- ⁸⁴ Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014). Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*, (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2009). Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- ⁸⁵ See, for example, Robert D. Crews, *Afghan Modern*, p.80.
- ⁸⁶ Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Magnus Marsden and Diana Ibanez-Tirado, "Repertoires of family life and the anchoring of Afghan trading networks in Ukraine," *History and Anthropology* 26.2 (2015): 145-164
- ⁸⁷ Magnus Marsden, "We are both diplomats and traders: Afghan transregional traders across the former Soviet Union. *Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*," 34. 2: 59-75. See also Noah Coburn, *Bazaar Politics*. (Stanford University Press 2014).
- ⁸⁸ Magnus Marsden, "Islamic cosmopolitanism out of Muslim Asia: Hindu-Muslim business co-operation between Odessa and Yiwu," *History and Anthropology* 29.1 (2018): 121-139.
- ⁸⁹ For a critical perspective from the perspective of an historian of Afghanistan see Nile Green "Maritime Worlds and Global History: Comparing the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean through Barcelona and Bombay", *History Compass* 11. 7 (2013): 513-523 and Nile Green, "Re-Thinking the 'Middle East' After the Oceanic Turn", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34. 3 (2014): 556-564. Enseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).